

In the Claims:

1. - 14. (cancelled)

15. (Previously presented) A coupling according to claim 37, wherein the ring halves, besides said bolting means for fixing their extremities in one place comprise pivoting means for fixing them in their opposite extremities.

16. (Previously presented) A coupling according to claim 42, wherein the first end portion comprises a tubular insert coupled between a tubular section and said second end portion, and wherein the insert end facing the tubular section is a ring which can slide axially over said tubular section whereas the opposite insert end is a ring over which said second end portion can slide.

17. (Currently amended) A coupling according to claim 4345, wherein the length of the overlap portion between the first and second tube portions is 50% or less of the inner diameter of the first portion.

18. (Currently amended) A coupling according to claim 4345, wherein the length of the overlap portion between the first and second end portions is 5% or more of the inner diameter of the first portion.

19. (Currently amended) A coupling according to claim 4345, wherein the coupling is an high vacuum or ultra-high vacuum coupling, and includes a second sealing ring located between the first tubular section and the abutment ring.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Currently amended) A coupling for a cylindrical sputtering target according to claim 2042 wherein said flange extremity is a separate ring.

22. (Previously presented) A coupling for a cylindrical sputtering target according to claim 38, wherein the ring halves, besides said bolting means for fixing their extremities in one place comprise pivoting means for fixing them in their opposite extremities.
23. (Currently amended) A coupling for a cylindrical sputtering target according to claim ~~2042~~, wherein the first end position comprises a tubular insert coupled between a tubular section and said second end portion, and wherein the insert end facing the tubular section is a ring which can slide axially over said tubular section whereas the opposite insert end is a ring over which said second end portion can slide.
24. (Currently amended) A coupling for a cylindrical sputtering target according to claim ~~2042~~, wherein the length of the overlap portion between the first and second tube portions is 50% or less of the inner diameter of the first portion.
25. (Currently amended) A coupling according to claim ~~2042~~, wherein the length of the overlap portion between the first and second end portions is 5% or more of the inner diameter of the first portion.
26. (Currently amended) A coupling for a cylindrical sputtering target according to claim ~~2042~~, wherein the coupling is an high vacuum or ultra-high vacuum coupling.
27. (Currently amended) The coupling for a cylindrical sputtering target according to claim ~~2042~~, wherein the fixing means of the clamping ring is located on the side of the coupling remote from the sputtering target.
28. (Currently amended) The coupling for a cylindrical sputtering target according to claim ~~2042~~, further comprising an anti-arcng element.
29. (Previously presented) The coupling for a cylindrical sputtering target according to claim 28, the anti-arcng element being attached to a surface of the clamping ring on the same side as the sputtering target for preventing arcng.

30. (Previously presented) The coupling for a cylindrical sputtering target according to claim 28, wherein the anti-arcing element is conductive or insulating.
31. (Previously presented) The coupling for a cylindrical sputtering target according to claim 28, wherein at least one groove is provided between the anti-arcing element and the clamping ring.
32. (Previously presented) The coupling for a cylindrical sputtering target according to claim 28, wherein the arcing element touches a surface of the sputtering target.
33. (Currently amended) A coupling according to claim ~~43~~45, wherein the length of the overlap portion between the first and second tube portions is 30% or less of the inner diameter of the first portion.
34. (Currently amended) A coupling according to claim ~~43~~45, wherein the length of the overlap portion between the first and second tube portions is 20% or less of the inner diameter of the first portion.
35. (Currently amended) A coupling for a cylindrical sputtering target according to claim ~~20~~42, wherein the length of the overlap portion between the first and second tube portions is 30% or less of the inner diameter of the first portion.
36. (Currently amended) A coupling for a cylindrical sputtering target according to claim ~~20~~42, wherein the length of the overlap portion between the first and second tube portions is 20% or less of the inner diameter of the first portion.
37. (Currently amended) A coupling according to claim ~~43~~45, wherein the clamp elements are two substantially equal ring halves.
38. (Currently amended) A coupling for a cylindrical sputtering target according to claim ~~20~~42, wherein the clamp elements are two substantially equal ring halves.

39. (Currently amended) A coupling according to claim ~~20~~42, wherein the length of the overlap portion between the first and second tube portions is at least 5% of the inner diameter of the first portion.

40. (Currently amended) A coupling according to claim ~~43~~45, wherein the length of the overlap portion between the first and second tube portions is at least 5% of the inner diameter of the first portion.

41. (Cancelled)

42. (Currently amended) A vacuum tight coupling for a cylindrical sputtering target for end portions of two tubular sections, each tubular section having an inner diameter and an outer diameter, the outer diameter of the first tubular section being smaller than the inner diameter of the second tubular section, the second tubular section axially slidable over the first tubular section to abut against a peripheral outer abutment ring on said first tubular section, the coupling further including at least one sealing ring located between the outer diameter of the first tubular section and the inner diameter of the second tubular section in a sliding overlapping contact area of the first and second tubular sections, the outer diameter of the first tubular section is generally parallel to the opposing surface of the inner wall of the second tubular section from the sealing ring to the end of the first tubular section, the coupling and further comprising a clamping ring with a substantially cylindrical outer surface and being composed of clamping elements, each clamp element having a semi-circular or U-shaped cross section with an inwardly oriented recess, said recess enclosing said abutment ring and a flange extremity on the second tubular section, said flange extremity is a separate ring, said recess cooperating with the flange extremity to positively, solidly and axially clamp the abutment ring against the flange extremity, the clamp elements being fixed to each other at their extremities with fixing means comprising in at least one place on the clamping ring bolting means, the axis of which is perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the coupled tubular sections and substantially tangential to the clamping ring periphery.

43. (cancelled)

44. (Currently amended) A vacuum tight coupling for end portions of two tubular sections having end portions, the end portion of the first tubular section being a flange extending in a radial direction from the first tubular section, the flange being of a diameter not exceeding the maximum diameter of the second ~~tube~~ tubular section, the second tube end portion being slidable over the end portion of the first tubular section creating an area of overlap, at least one sealing ring located in the area of overlap, the outer diameter of the first tubular section is generally parallel to the opposing surface of the inner wall of the second tubular section from the sealing ring to the end of the first tubular section, the end portion of the first tubular section further including an abutment ring about the outer periphery ~~and the end portion of the second tubular section further including a flange extremity,~~ the end portion of the second tubular section being provided with a flange extremity being a separate ring, the coupling further including a clamping ring with a substantially cylindrical outer surface and being composed of clamping elements, each clamp element having a semi-circular or U-shaped cross section with an inwardly oriented recess, said recess enclosing said abutment ring and a flange extremity on the second tubular section, said recess cooperating with the flange extremity to positively, solidly and axially clamp the abutment ring against the flange extremity, the clamp elements being fixed to each other at their extremities with fixing means comprising in at least one place on the clamping ring bolting means, the axis of which is perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the coupled tubular sections and substantially tangential to the clamping ring periphery.

45. (new) A vacuum tight coupling for end portions of two tubular sections, the first tubular section being a spindle, the second tubular section being a target, the end portion of the second tubular section having an inner tubular wall and the end portion of the first tubular section having an outer tubular wall, said inner wall of said second tubular section being slidable over said outer wall end portion of the first tubular section creating an area of overlap, at least one sealing ring located in the area of overlap between said inner tubular wall and said outer tubular wall, the end portion of the first tubular section further including an abutment ring about the outer periphery the end portion of the second tubular section being provided with a flange extremity being a separate ring, the coupling further including a clamping ring with a substantially cylindrical outer surface and being composed of clamping elements, each clamp element having a semi-circular or

U-shaped cross section with an inwardly oriented recess, said recess enclosing said abutment ring and a flange extremity on the second tubular section, the flange extremity being a separate ring, said recess cooperating with the flange extremity to positively, solidly and axially clamp the abutment ring against the flange extremity while exercising a uniform and radial pressure on said at least one sealing ring, the clamp elements being fixed to each other at their extremities with fixing means comprising in at least one place on the clamping ring bolting means, the axis of which is perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the coupled tubular sections and substantially tangential to the clamping ring periphery.